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Grade 9
Achievement Test

English Language Arts
Part B: Reading

June 1996

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Grade 9 Achievement Test
English Language Arts

Part B: Reading

Readings Booklet

Description


Part B: Reading of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test has 2 booklets:

- the Readings Booklet contains 8 reading selections and 1 visual
- the Questions Booklet contains 55 questions

Instructions

Be sure that you have a **Readings Booklet**, a **Questions Booklet**, and an **Answer Sheet**.

The instructions for writing the test are included in the Questions Booklet.



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- I. Sometimes, trying to start a new relationship can be a difficult experience. Read how one young man managed this challenge in “The Phone Call” and answer questions 1 to 8 from your Questions Booklet.**

THE PHONE CALL

“Hello?”

“Hello, Noreen. Guess who this is.”

No, that wouldn’t work. That’s too childish. I want her to think I’m mature. Besides, what if she guesses wrong? I’ll have to try something else.

5 “Hello?”

“Hello. Is Noreen there?”

That’s no good, either. What if her mother answered? I’d want her to think I’m polite. Let’s see.

“Hello, may I please speak to Noreen?”

10 “This is Noreen.”

“Hi, Noreen. This is Sam.”

“Sam? Sam who?”

Sam who? She’s got to know who I am. I mean, she’s new at school, but she’s been here a month now, and we’re in the same homeroom and the same biology class. Besides, I’m the only guy in homeroom on the junior football team. She’s got to know who I am. But what if she doesn’t? Let’s see.

15 “Hello, Noreen. This is Sam Jenkins.”

“Sam who?”

20 “Sam Jenkins. We’re in the same homeroom. I sit near the windows. Mr. Mickle always makes me empty the wastebasket for him every morning.”

“Oh, hi, Sam. How are you?”

“Great, thanks. How are you?”

Wait. If I say I’m great, will she think I’m stuck up? I don’t want her to think I’m stuck up. I’m fine. That’s it. I’ll say I’m fine. No, that’s too dull, boring. 25 Most people say they’re fine. I have to say something original. I’ll say I’m . . . smooth. No, that’s too cool, and I’m not that cool. I need something more natural, more like me.

Nervous, that’s it. I’ll tell her I’ve never called up a girl before, and I’m nervous. She’ll appreciate my honesty, and she’ll feel so sorry for me that she’ll be really nice. No, that’s pity, and I don’t want pity. If I’m going to ask her to this dance, I’ve got to be confident. I have to act as if I know what I’m doing. I’ll say I’m . . . okay. Yeah, that’s it for sure. I’m okay—not too cool and not 30 conceited.

“I’m okay, Noreen.”

35 All right, what’s next? Do I ask her out right away, or do I make small talk? If I ask her out right away, maybe I’ll seem too anxious, too desperate. I need

Continued

something else. Let's see.

"Noreen, do you know what the homework is for biology tomorrow?"

40 Biology. Should I ask about biology, or will she think I'm a nerd? I don't know. She's pretty smart, and she might think I'm the intellectual type if I ask her about schoolwork. It will show that I'm serious about my education. But if I'm serious about my education, why don't I have the biology assignment?

Football. I'll ask her if she's going to the game on Saturday. No, I can't do that. I can't say anything about the game until I ask her to the Graduation Dance.
45 If she says no to that, I can forget about taking her to the game. If she says no, what do I do then? Do I hang up? Do I tell her to take a hike?

Ah, she won't say no. She's too new. She doesn't know anybody yet. Even if she doesn't want to go out with me, she'll say yes, and once she says yes, once she gets to know me, she'll be in love. She'll want me to sit with her at lunch.
50 She'll come to the football games to watch me play, and she'll hang around afterward and wait for me. Yeah, she'll definitely say yes. She's got to.

Okay, forget football. How about this?

"Noreen, I was wondering if you could recommend a good book for me for my book report."

55 That's perfect. She's always reading some kind of paperback book in homeroom, and I've seen her in the library a lot. Yeah, I'll ask her to give me some ideas. We'll discuss books for a while. Then I'll switch the conversation over to movies, where I'll be more at home.

All right, books, movies . . . then what? I wonder if I should write all this
60 down so I won't forget. Nah, that's stupid. I'll wing it. I'll be all right. Okay, after the small talk I'll ask her to the dance.

"Noreen, how would you like to share an evening in paradise with me?"

No, I'm just kidding. I've got to relax.

65 "Noreen, I was wondering if you'd like to go to the Graduation Dance with me."

I was wondering. That's the same thing I said about the book report. No, I've got to come up with something better.

"Noreen, what are you doing Friday night?"

70 Nope, that's not very cool. I saw that in "Dear Abby." You can't beat around the bush. You've got to come right out with it.

"Noreen, would you like to go to the Graduation Dance with me?"

"Oh, Sam, I'd love to. I was hoping you'd ask me."

Once she says yes, I can relax. Then we can talk about anything. I'll call her every night. We'll go out every weekend. She'll invite me over for dinner.

75 Okay, here goes. Relax. Dial her number. That's right. Now remember what you have to say.

"Hello, may I please speak to Noreen?"

"I'm sorry. Noreen just went to bed. You'll have to call back tomorrow."

Jim LaBate

II. Read "The Clippers" and answer questions 9 to 13 from your Questions Booklet.

THE CLIPPERS

—from *The Romance of Sail*

The clippers, the most dramatic of the sailing breed, were of a multiplicity of types and rigs. An early version was the three-masted Baltimore clipper: later came the Blackwell frigates, tall barques, schooners and full-rigged ships. One factor, though, singles out the archetypal clipper—its long, narrow, racing lines. For the clippers depended on speed above all else, even cargo capacity, for their success. Literally, they "clipped" the wind. If a clipper was to be profitable, it had to be faster than its competitors, which by the 1850s included power-ships of increasing reliability and greater capacity.

A major event that spurred clipper development came in 1849 when the British Navigation Acts were repealed, so opening up a previously closed-shop trade to all comers. The Americans were quick to assert their interest, and the efficiency of their merchantmen was soon a byword. The year 1849 was also the year of the California gold rush, when it seemed there were never enough ships to carry gold-crazed speculators to San Francisco. Meanwhile, the Far East was fountainhead to a bustling tea trade as well as a less creditable traffic in opium; and, at the same time, the Australian wool trade was expanding. Everything conspired to make the dashing clipper the ideal vessel for the times—so long as it could keep up its own searing pace . . . 97 days from Hong Kong to London; Melbourne to Liverpool in 63 days; Newcastle, New South Wales to Shanghai in 28 days; Foochow to Gravesend, against the monsoon, in 91 days; Boston Light to Liverpool in 13 days, 19 and 1/2 hours; 702 kilometres in a day's run. The mood of the competitors was at times closer to hysteria than commercial enthusiasm, and no ships were driven harder than the clippers; many were commanded by rampaging captains and sadistic mates, suitably named Bully This and Bully That.

In the end, it was the desperate search for extra speed that undermined the clippers' position and hastened their demise. To achieve a faster shape, their lines were progressively reduced until they had become overbred for their function: eventually too narrow to carry enough wool or tea for the prices their owners could get, they found their market deserting them. There was no scope for a comeback; the march of steam was irreversible. And so the slender "China birds," the "ghosters," as they had been known in their prime, slid away to extinction.

Michael Leitch

III. Read the excerpt from “The Inspector General” and answer questions 14 to 21 from your Questions Booklet.

from THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, Act 2

SCENE: *A room in a provincial hotel in Russia; early nineteenth century.*

SERVANT: The manager sent me to see what you want.

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, good to see you, old man. How are things going?

SERVANT: All right, thank you.

KHLESTAKOV: Is business booming here at the hotel?

5 SERVANT: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: Lots of guests?

SERVANT: Adequate, sir.

10 KHLESTAKOV: Well fine! You know, it’s almost past dinner time and I haven’t eaten yet. Do a good turn and bring me a tray immediately, or I shall be late for my appointment.

SERVANT: Sorry, sir, but the manager will charge no more dinners to you. In fact, today he almost sent a complaint about you to the police.

KHLESTAKOV: A complaint? That’s ridiculous. After all, I’ve got to eat or I shall starve. The truth of the matter is, I’m quite famished!

15 SERVANT: Be that as it may. He said he wasn’t going to give you anything else until you had cleared up your bill.

KHLESTAKOV: Well, can’t you talk to him? Put in a good word for me!

SERVANT: But what can I say?

20 KHLESTAKOV: Talk to him seriously and tell him I’ve got to have something to eat. The money—well—tell him just because his kind can go all day without food, doesn’t mean that other people can. Preposterous idea!

SERVANT: Yes, sir, I’ll tell him. (*Exit SERVANT*)

25 KHLESTAKOV: How disgusting if he refuses to send up dinner. I’ve never been so hungry. I wonder if I could pawn my clothes? My trousers? No, I’d rather not eat than go home without my Petersburg suit. Too bad that Yokhim wouldn’t let me rent a carriage. It would have been great to drive up in style to a landlord’s house with my carriage lanterns on and Osip behind in uniform. How impressed they would be. “Who is it? Who has come?” Then my footman would announce (*He imitates footman*), “Ivan Alexandrovich Khlestakov of Petersburg. Will you receive him?” Those country dunces, though, wouldn’t even know what that meant. If any farmer visits them, he stumbles right into the living room like a bear. Hmmm. I’d go up to a pretty young girl and say, “Mademoiselle, I am so happy—” Huh! (*He spits*) I’m so hungry I feel nauseated. (*Enter SERVANT*)

35 KHLESTAKOV: Yes, what do you want?

SERVANT: I’m bringing dinner.

KHLESTAKOV (*Claps his hands and jumps into his chair*): Ah, dinner. At last, dinner.

Continued

SERVANT: The manager says this is the last dinner he will send you.

40 KHLESTAKOV: Oh, the manager. Who cares about the manager? What's there to eat?

SERVANT: Soup and roast beef.

KHLESTAKOV: You mean that is all?

SERVANT: That's all, sir.

45 KHLESTAKOV: Nonsense. I won't hear of it. That's not enough.

SERVANT: On the contrary, sir, the manager says it's far too much!

KHLESTAKOV: But what about the gravy?

SERVANT: There isn't any.

KHLESTAKOV: Why not? When I passed the kitchen I saw them making a lot,

50 and earlier in the dining room, I saw two short looking men eating salmon and other good things.

SERVANT: Well, there is some and then there isn't.

KHLESTAKOV: What do you mean?

SERVANT: I mean, there isn't any, sir.

55 KHLESTAKOV: No salmon? No gravy? No chops?

SERVANT: No, sir. Well, yes, sir. But only for those who pay, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, you, knucklehead. Why should I go hungry while they eat? Aren't I as good as they?

SERVANT: No, sir. Well, yes sir, but the difference is, they have money.

60 KHLESTAKOV: Oh, it's a waste of time to argue with you. (*Tastes soup*) What awful soup. Why, it's only hot water you've poured into the bowl. There's no taste at all, only a dreadful smell. I'll not eat it! You must bring me some other.

SERVANT: Sorry, sir. The manager said if you didn't like this, you could go

65 without.

KHLESTAKOV (*Holding his bowl and plate*): Well, then leave it. Only, don't talk like that to me. I'll not have it. (*Tastes soup again*) Heavens, what soup. (*Continues to eat it*) I'm probably the first to ever eat soup like this. Why, there's even a feather floating on top. (*Spoons a piece of chicken in the soup*)

70 Ah, even the fowl is foul. Pass me the roast beef. Here, Osip, there's some soup left for you. (*Cuts meat*) You call this roast beef? It most certainly is not!

SERVANT: Then what is it?

KHLESTAKOV: Only the devil knows, but it is not beef. It tastes more like leather. Cheaters! What they won't give a person. Why, my jaw aches from

75 chewing just one bite. (*Picks teeth with finger*) It's even worse than tree bark. I can't get it out. Such food is enough to ruin one's teeth. (*Wipes mouth with napkin*) Isn't there anything else?

SERVANT: No, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: What cheaters they are. Not even dessert. It's terrible the way

80 they always take advantage of travelers.

Nikolai Gogol
adapted by Fran Tanner

IV. Read the poem “River Skater” and answer questions 22 to 26 from your Questions Booklet.

RIVER SKATER

Bound to a boy's swift feet, hard blades of steel
Ring out a brutal rhythm from black ice.
A gawky skater with a godlike heel,
He cuts a clear and convolute device,
5 A foliated script, nor looks around
To see what letters twine where he has come,
But all delighted with the savage sound,
His body beats from such a solid drum,
He springs into a faster pace, and then,
10 Far down the pastures, paper-white and pure,
You see his figure slanted like a pen,
Writing his own and winter's signature.

Winifred Welles

V. Read the information about Kootenai Brown and answer questions 27 to 34 from your Questions Booklet.

Kootenai Brown was the legend-shrouded frontiersman who started Waterton Park

The Indians called John George Brown “Inuspi” (Longhair), for his hairstyle; his countrymen called him “Kootenai,” the old name for the lakes 50 miles southwest of Fort Macleod where he made his isolated home after 1874. No townsman, Kootenai Brown was a sometime soldier, adventurer, prospector, Indian fighter, express rider, buffalo hunter, wolfer and trader; but he spent the last 25 years of his life campaigning for a national park in the Kootenai Lakes region, by then known as Waterton.¹ Ultimately he was successful.

Legend attached itself to Kootenai like barnacles to a boat. Biographer William Rodney, in *Kootenai Brown: His Life and Times*, has dismissed some of the stories. He found no evidence that scandal forced the well-born young Irishman to flee the court of Queen Victoria, for example, or that he killed a fellow British officer in India. But Brown’s subsequent career, after he resigned his commission in the Imperial Army and headed for Canada’s west coast in 1863, was adventurous enough.

With four companions he trekked through the mountains into Alberta in 1865, via the pass named South Kootenay on later maps, and into Blackfoot country. They were soon set upon by a band of young warriors. Although two of the attackers were killed and the rest fled, Brown took an arrow in the back. In Manitoba in 1867 he and Edmonton trader James Gibbons barely survived an attack by two dozen angry Indian customers. When he signed on as an express rider carrying the United States mail through Montana Sioux country from Fort Stevenson to Fort Benton, that job proved equally hazardous.

One day in 1868 a Fort Stevenson sentry saw what he thought were two naked Indians approaching the gate. As Harold Fryer tells the story in *Alberta: The Pioneer Years*, the sergeant of the guard recognized Brown and a fellow pony express rider. “What’s up?” he demanded. “Nothing much,” Brown replied. “The Sioux have your mail, horses and our clothes and came mighty near getting us.”

The pair had been captured but not scalped, Brown used to explain, because the other rider was part Sioux and convinced the Indians that Brown was too. Stripped and imprisoned, they managed to escape and walk back to the fort, much bitten by mosquitoes. The next year, 1869, he survived a blizzard that killed three

Continued

¹ Lieutenant Thomas Blakiston of the Palliser expedition renamed the Kootenai Lakes region in honour of English naturalist Charles Waterton.

companions. Despite all this, he carried on with the pony express for another five years, then joined the Metis in their vast buffalo hunts.

35 He had married a Metis, Olive Lyonais, and liked her people's way of life. He always claimed the Metis were in effect conservationists. Father Albert Lacombe, the great Oblate missionary they so respected, taught them that waste was a sin. So they made use of the entire carcass, Brown said, not just the hind like white hunters, or the hide and tongue like the Blackfoot.

40 But as the buffalo became scarce he had to take up the despised trade of wolfing—poisoning wolves with strychnine—to support his wife and two small daughters. It was in an argument over wolf hides in Montana, according to the stories, that he killed a trader named Louis Ell. Jailed at Fort Benton, he was tried for murder and acquitted. It was then he took his family back to live by the

45 Kootenai Lakes he had first seen 10 years earlier.

There they stayed, and Kootenai acquired his name. He traded, hunted and fished. "Mr. Brown of Kootenai Lakes brought to town on Saturday a trout weighing 30 pounds," reported the *Fort Macleod Gazette* in 1883. He worked as guide for the railway surveyors and packed in supplies for the track crews. In 50 1885, during the North-West Rebellion, he joined the Rocky Mountain Rangers, whose job was to see that southern Alberta's thousands of Blackfoot, Blood, Stoney and Peigan Indians did not join forces with the Metis. Kootenai, who spoke most of their languages, served as a scout.

Meanwhile a son, Leopold, was born in the cabin by the lake and not long afterwards Olive Brown died. Canon S.H. Middleton of the Church of England, a friend of Kootenai in the scout's later years, wrote in his reminiscences that this was in 1881.² A few years later Father Lacombe married Brown to a young Cree woman, Nichemoos (also called Isabella), who was to survive him.

Brown told Canon Middleton he also got into the oil business for a while, 60 around 1890, working with William Aldridge of Cardston to collect and sell crude at a dollar a barrel. Preservation of the Kootenai region became his major preoccupation, however. He had seen what happened to the buffalo.

Men like Pincher Creek rancher John Herron, the MP for Macleod, and William Pearce, who was then dominion superintendent of western mines, 65 supported his efforts. In 1895 they succeeded in getting a small forest reserve set aside there. Brown was given full charge of it in 1910. He promptly demanded a typewriter, and at the age of 71 learned to use it, to handle the attendant government paperwork.

The reserve was finally enlarged to 423 square miles in 1914, as Waterton 70 National Park. Kootenai Brown died two years later. He lies buried in his park, his grave flanked by those of his wives.

² One daughter of Olive and Kootenai Brown died in childhood. Canon Middleton says the other daughter married and was living in Quebec in the 1950s. Leopold married Justine Bellarose, had five daughters and died at Fort McMurray in 1916, a few months after his father.

VI. Read “Legacy Defaulted” and answer questions 35 to 39 from your Questions Booklet.

LEGACY DEFAULTED

As I walk into the room, I look around. This is the room where my father was born, where he spent his first three years, and I am hoping to find something that will tell me what he was like when he lived here. My grandparents had taken the family and moved to a bigger house when this one grew too small for them.

5 There seems, at first, to be nothing in the room except dust, but then in the corner, I see something, and walk over to examine it.

There are five blocks set one on top of another, with more scattered around the tower. They are small, about an inch square, with letters of the alphabet painted on them. The letters can hardly be seen any more. Lifting one off the floor to
10 examine it more closely, I realize that it’s one of the set my father told me about.

He had told me, when I was a boy, of the days when he was young. He had talked about the only memory of living in this old house that he had. It was moving day, and he had been puzzled, not understanding what was happening, but when he sat down to play with his letter blocks, the world grew still around him,
15 and he became calm. He told me that he never knew what had become of the set.

Now I know. I can see a picture before me of a small three year old, confused by all the activity around him, sitting down to play with the one familiar thing pulled from the packing boxes, a set of blocks. I can see him picking up five blocks, placing them one on top of another, very carefully, so that they are exactly
20 centered. He was always very meticulous.

They are like that still; the bottom four set precisely on top of each other. But the fifth one is over on the right, only half on the tower. Perhaps it had been knocked accidentally by a small hand as the boy left to answer his mother’s call. He had to go, and he left his blocks as they were, thinking he would be back in a
25 few minutes to play again.

He had never come back. Later, the house had become his, but it was not the structure he owned; it was the memory. Maybe he felt that if he came back, the memory would be gone, and all he would have left would be an old abandoned shell of a building.

30 Looking around now, I see that the boy has gone. He left the house to me, but not the memories. I had thought that this house would give me the key that would open the locked doors of his past, and the memories would be mine also. But the key left with the boy.

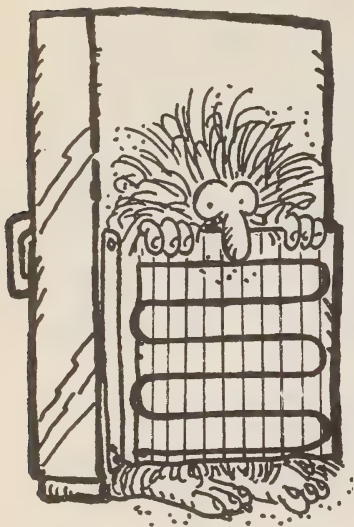
Denise Fair

VII. Read the consumer information pamphlet "Look Who's Stealing Your Electricity" and answer questions 40 and 41 from your Questions Booklet.

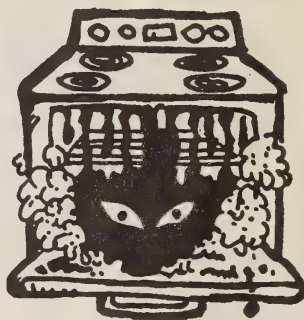
LOOK WHO'S STEALING YOUR ELECTRICITY

Take the \$2 bill test

Your refrigerator and oven use a lot of electricity and they can waste a lot too if they don't close properly. Shut the door of each appliance on a \$2 bill. If the bill pulls out easily, cold or hot air can flow out too, adding to your energy costs. The fridge may need a new gasket or the solution may be as simple as making sure the refrigerator is level. You may need to align the oven door, fix the hinges, or replace the gasket. Take the \$2 bill test and don't spend energy dollars you don't have to.



Heavy dust on the refrigerator's coils makes it work harder to keep its cool. A quick vacuuming of the coils behind or underneath the refrigerator can help your fridge last longer and it won't use more energy than it has to. (P.S. The ideal fridge temperature is 3° Celsius.)



Pots and pans that are battered and bent on the bottom, or have a heavy buildup of burnt-on black, use more energy to heat up than flat-bottomed, clean utensils. Tight-fitting lids, and burners that are the same size or smaller than the pot, also help stop energy waste.

Grease and burnt-on food really reduce your oven's efficiency. A clean oven works better and uses less electricity. Try putting tin foil on the oven bottom. It catches bits of food and grease for easy cleaning and it's a good reflector too.



Tune-up, Clean up

It's simple. Clean and well-cared-for appliances last longer and they use less electricity. Over the long run, you can save money on appliance replacement. And of course, the less energy you waste, the more dollars you save.

VIII. Read the article “The Pyramids,” and then answer questions 42 to 47 from your Questions Booklet.

THE PYRAMIDS

The etymology of the word *pyramid* is twofold. To the Greeks it meant a light or fire. To the Egyptians, *pyramid* referred to a divine place. Recent studies indicate that perhaps both of these origins have roots in history and give insight to the lives and philosophies of the pyramids’ architects.

5 Scientists tell us that the Great Pyramid at Giza, believed to be 5000 years old, is the largest found in Egypt. Its height is approximately equivalent to a forty-five-story building. The 2.5 million blocks within its structure, weighing from two to eleven tonnes each, cover almost seven hectares.

10 Engineers and scientists marvel at the size of the Great Pyramid and the enormous feat involved in its building. Philosophers and mathematicians check and recheck calculations that are often confusing, often astounding. They continuously revise their theories in an effort to understand fully the significance of the Giza pyramid and other, smaller pyramids.

15 Some claim extremely careful planning went into the building of the Great Pyramid. Others cite an abundance of coincidences in their attempts to explain the—as yet—inexplicable.

20 For example, a measurement has been found known as the “pyramid inch.” It is said to equal one-tenth of a millionth of the earth’s meridian. Also, the sum of the Pyramid’s base sides equals 36 524 pyramid inches, or one hundred times the number of pyramid inches that there are days in a year. Pyramidologists also point out that the height of the Great Pyramid times 10 million gives the distance from the earth to the sun. One pyramid inch times 100 million equals the distance that the earth travels around the sun.

25 There are other assertions. Twice the length of the four sides of the pyramids is said to equal one minute of degree at the equator. The weight of the pyramid (545 000 tonnes) times one billion yields the estimated weight of the earth.

What does all this mean? Why was the Great Pyramid at Giza built, and who built it? There are several popular theories answering these questions.

30 Some believe the Great Pyramid was built as a tomb to immortalize the pharaohs or as a marker to memorialize a particular reign. Perhaps it was planned as a time capsule capable of reviewing the past and foretelling the future. There is some evidence that the pyramids in general were designed to be used as surveying instruments or as scientific observatories to track and calculate certain natural cycles.

35 Years of study, although producing immense volumes of information, have left us far from certain or satisfied as to the origins or intended purposes of the pyramids. Our theories are rife with doubt; our conclusions are open to other interpretations.

Perhaps some day we’ll learn the secrets of the pyramids. But for now these answers are locked within the great walls, a monument to the genius of ancient peoples.

Cathy Sans

XI. Read the excerpt from *The Guardian of Isis* and answer questions 48 to 55 from your Questions Booklet.

THE GUARDIAN OF ISIS

Jody stared at her. He had never really noticed her before. She was a very pretty girl, with black hair in two very long plaits, and brown eyes, very big in a face dusted with freckles. Her blatant admiration warmed him inside. He stuffed another juicy collop of roast meat into his mouth and began to tell her about all the ideas he had had, ideas that had come to nothing because nobody had cared. She listened to him, her eyes wide with admiration, looking down only for more food.

Around them the other eight hundred and twenty-seven inhabitants of Isis ate and drank and laughed, filling the bellies that had shrunk during the long winter's fast until they could feel the skin stretch and hurt. As they ate, Ra's light faded and the sky slowly darkened from green to the blackness of deep space.

Voices became lower. Conversations trailed off unfinished. Greasy mouths and fingers were wiped. Every eye was fixed on the western horizon, as the stars slowly popped out of the darkness like fireflies.

The western rim of the mountains that enclosed the Valley hid the true horizon, but there was a cleft between two peaks, like a child's toothless gap; and it was on this gap that every eye was fixed. Two stars appeared close together, white, not very bright. The people watched in silence. At length, as it grew even darker, a third star appeared, making a small triangle point down in the gap between the far peaks. Earth! There was a cheer from everyone but the babies, who had long ago fallen asleep on the grass, gluttoned with food.

Earth! Small, reddish-gold, quite insignificant in a sky that was by now fully jewelled in magnificence. Jody stared up at the tiny point of light. Could it really be true that his very own grandparents, and all the other Councillors and elders, had travelled through the unknowable emptinesses of dark space from that tiny point of light? Could that poor weak dot of light really have been a place to live, a place called Home? Of all the legends and stories that the Council told, . . . this one was the hardest to swallow.

Monica Hughes

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